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INFO SOMALIA COLLECTIVE

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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI: FONMIN ON SOMALIA DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. (SBU) Summary: Foreign Minister Mahmoud Youssouf briefed the diplomatic corps July 12 on regional diplomatic initiatives and military support for Somalia. He noted agreement within both the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) on strengthening the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and praised the willingness of the troop contributing countries to implement more muscular measures in support of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Once the AMISOM mandate is changed to permit bordering countries to send troops, GODJ will consider a contribution. IGAD members plan to lobby the UN Security Council in meetings at the end of this month to impose targeted sanctions on regional spoilers - notably Eritrean leaders and ruling-party-affiliated firms. Commenting on heaving fighting in Mogadishu July 10-11, Youssouf said a number of foreign fighters had been captured, including two who committed suicide rather than be taken alive. The TFG plans heavy media coverage of the presence of these fighters. Youssouf reported on GODJ training of approximately 460 TFG recruits at Hol Hol, and thanked the U.S. and France for their material support to the GODJ. He stressed the need for additional training and material support to the TFG, adding that the Ethiopians are prepared to train "several thousand" if requested. Youssouf's comments underscore continued active GODJ efforts to bolster the TFG. End summary.

AU Summit Results

12. (SBU) In substantive remarks during a farewell lunch for the departing Saudi Ambassador, Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf briefed the diplomatic corps on the outcome of the African Union summit (July 1-3) and the 33rd Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers (July 10). After reviewing general points on the AU summit - including creation of the new AU "secretaries," efforts to integrate NEPAD, and the decision regarding the ICC and Sudanese President Bashir -- Youssouf focused on Somalia and Eritrea.

13. (SBU) Youssouf said there was agreement at the AU summit to (1) revise the AMISOM mandate (authorizing more robust support of TFG forces and enabling "front-line states" - i.e., Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya - to contribute troops), and (2) sanction individuals and states that undermine the peace process. In response to questions, Youssouf said Djibouti was waiting for the formal change in mandate (by AU PSC and the UNSC) before determining its contribution to AMISOM, which could be either troops or logistical support. On the Djibouti/Eritrea border dispute, the AU summit endorsed earlier

calls by AU members urging Asmara to withdraw its troops from the border area and participate in international mediation. Asked what specific sanctions should be applied to Eritrea, Youssouf specified the need for targeted "smart" sanctions to impose travel and financial restrictions on senior GSE leaders and ruling-party-affiliated companies, such as "Red Sea Trading Corporation."

Next Diplomatic Moves in New York

¶4. (SBU) Youssouf highlighted a series of upcoming meetings of the UN Security Council, at which IGAD would push its agenda. They include: (1) a July 21 UNSC meeting on the Djibouti/Eritrea border dispute; (2) a July 22 meeting on post-conflict peace-building; and (3) a July 29 briefing and consultation on Somalia. (Note: We learned in a later discussion with visiting Somali Foreign Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Omar, that he, Youssouf, and Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa would lead a delegation to New York to press for the AMISOM mandate change, further support to the TFG, and sanctions against Eritrea. End note.)

Fighting in Mogadishu

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¶5. (SBU) Speaking briefly of the military situation in Mogadishu, Youssouf praised AMISOM for having taken the initiative and been "more pro-active" in support of the TFG in fighting July 10-11. He said AMISOM was not waiting for the formal amendment of the mandate but was already proceeding to implement the intent of the AU leadership and the willingness of the TCCs to be more aggressive. With AMISOM support, the TFG had gained ground in the strategic Karan neighborhood overlooking the port, he said.

¶6. (SBU) Youssouf reported the TFG had captured "some" (NFI) foreign fighters, and that two had committed suicide rather than be taken alive (one shot himself in the head, and the other took a suicide pill). The TFG is preparing to show the captured foreign fighters to the media to underscore that the fighting pits Somalis against foreign extremists. Indeed, according to Yusuf, the intensity of the July 10-11 fighting was in part due to the foreigners fighting fiercely to avoid capture and exposure.

GODJ Training of TFG Continues

¶7. (SBU) Youssouf told the diplomatic corps that 458 TFG recruits were in Hol Hol for training. He thanked the USG and French for support to the GODJ. He added that the French had committed to begin training "a battalion" (NFI) by the end of July. Youssouf added that Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum told his IGAD counterparts that the GOE is prepared to train "several thousand" TFG forces at training sites that already exist in eastern Ethiopia.

Comment

¶8. (SBU) Youssouf's briefing underscored Djibouti's intense focus on Somalia developments, and the GODJ's active role in (1) diplomatic efforts at IGAD, the AU, and soon UNSC, and (2) direct military assistance and training, within GODJ's limited means, to the TFG.

SWAN